

Borough of West Reading
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES

December 11, 2023

Committee Members Present

Philip Wert, Chair
Dean Murray, Borough Manager
Mark Ratcliffe, WRCRF Manager
Nick Price, WRCRF Manager Incoming

Aaron Gantz
Heidi Reuter
Robin Horman
Chad Moyer

Visitors Present

Dan Horman

Call to Order

Mr. Wert called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Approval of the Minutes

Motion made by Mrs. Horman and seconded by Mrs. Reuter to approve the minutes of November 13, 2023 meeting. Motion carried.

Main Street Director Introduction

Mr. Wert introduced Nick Price as the incoming Main Street Director, Mark Ratcliffe is technically done at the end of the month but will help when needed or until Mr. Price is comfortable in his new position.

Residential Properties Update

Residential sales have slowed a bit to only five or six this past month. LLC businesses seem to be purchasing houses to rent or flip. There were also a few family transfers.

West Reading Commercial Properties Update

- 400 Penn – Winnie Mochi, slated to open in Spring 2024.
- 433 Penn – Schweitzer's Service Center. No further information available.
- 450 Penn – Vivi Bubble Tea, opening to be determined.
- 547 Penn – Brazilian Jujitsu potentially going in where the bank was.
- 525 Penn – Talks of a potential Coffee shop going in the old Yorgey's dry cleaning unit.
- 544 Penn – Coral Reef moved next door and is now vacant, property is up for sale.
- 333 Buttonwood – Property is listed for sale, there is discussion of Fortna possibly staying and leasing the space.

Strategic Planning Discussion

- Wyomissing Report – Mr. Wert advised that the Inn at Reading is potentially selling in January and being converted partially to an apartment complex per the Wyomissing Borough Manager. There is discussion of pad development at the Berkshire Mall, but this may be hindered due to PennDOT's plan for a State Hill Road Project.

Strategic Planning Next Steps

1. Design Standards – Mr. Wert advised that the Planning Commission is still meeting with Derck & Edson on form-based codes. They are currently preparing proposed changes to the Zoning Ordinance that would improve the flow of locating information.
2. BID Update – There was discussion regarding Mark's retirement and replacement. Mr. Price has ideas on how to get up and move in the right direction.

Old/New Business

Railroad Bridge – Currently working with Goggleworks and the Railroad to move forward with a Gateway improvement project.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:16 p.m. Motion made by Mrs. Horman and seconded by Mr. Ratcliffe.

Respectfully submitted,

Dean Murray
Borough Manager